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LEGALITIES



News from the
State Law Library
of Montana

MONTANA STATE LIBRARY,
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HELENA, MONTANA 59620

Vol. 1, No. 1

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FROM THE STATE LAW LIBRARIAN

The idea for this newsletter arose when we were brainstorming over ways to communicate to our patrons the wide variety of resources and services that we have available for Montanans. We are anxious for you to know who we are, the new databases we can tap for your research, and policies that ensure equitable extension of our resources.

Being the director of the State Law library of Montana is uniquely challenging because of the size of our state and the sparseness of legal information resources outside of Helena. We are committed to providing these resources to the citizens of Montana.

Judy Meadows

NEW KID ON THE BLOCK

George Jackson is our new reference librarian. A graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, George graduated from the University of Pittsburgh School of Law and received his masters degree from the University of Pittsburgh School of Library and Information Sciences.

Originally from Montana, George is pleased to be back in order to pursue his interests in whitewater rafting and skiing. He cooks as a hobby and plays the cello. Welcome, George!

C.L.E. INFO

We have spent \$15,000 in the past twelve months on audio and video tapes, which can be used for satisfaction of your C.L.E. requirements. The subjects vary from orthopedic injuries and disability to the exclusionary rule. We also have tapes for your clients and prospective jurors. Please keep in mind that determination and certification of number of hours of C.L.E. credits you claim is a matter to be negotiated between you and the State Bar.

*AT A GLANCE

Looking for legal advice in the Northern Rockies? Your best chance is Montana.



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The Treasure State has 1,850 lawyers, up 23.3 percent from 1980; 180 of those lawyers reside out of state. Wyoming has 1,210 lawyers, up 10.8 from 1980; 300 are from out of state.

In South Dakota, the number of lawyers has risen 18.5 percent since 1980, today totaling 1,420. North Dakota boasts 1,466 practicing lawyers, up nearly 24 percent from 1980.

* From Western Business, Vol. 3, no. 4.

WHAT'S OURS IS YOURS

You, too, can have a list, i.e. a catalog, of the books, law reviews, video tapes, etc. that are in the law library's collection. In order to increase the usefulness and convenience of the library's materials, copies of the library's microfiche catalog are available. Materials may be located by author, subject, or title. Access to a microfiche reader is necessary for using the catalog.

Individual editions of the catalog cost \$25.00. An annual subscription consisting of four quarterly editions costs \$75.00. Send orders for the catalog with payment to Jan Mills at the law library.

ON-LINE WIZARDRY

On-line legal research is one of the most powerful and cost-efficient, yet underused, tools available to attorneys. It's usefulness is apparent at any stage of a research project. As an initial step, it gives one both an idea of the amount of material to be involved and points of departure for research exploration. Throughout a project, its interactive nature allows the searcher to modify strategies continuously. As a final step, this method is an excellent way to verify conventional research from printed sources.

The law library offers on-line searching through both WESTLAW and DIALOG. WESTLAW covers federal materials both generally (statutes, cases, and administrative materials) and topically (i.e., tax, securities, etc.). Arrangement is according to federal circuits. State materials are searchable as "allstates", individual states, and regionally--as in the regional reporters.

Citators, both Insta-Cite and Shepard's are available on-line through WESTLAW. Insta-Cite provides complete case histories which are current to within days in most instances. For cases after 1971, Insta-Cite includes both prior and subsequent, direct and indirect history. Prior to 1971, cases are listed for citation verification. Shepard's listings are similar to those in a Shepard's citations bound volume, but the searching is much quicker and less cumbersome.

DIALOG is a company offering general information retrieval through several hundred databases. A wide variety of legal information is available.

Attorneys who wish to utilize on-line legal research should contact the library. WESTLAW training sessions and/or appointments for an on-line search with trained library personnel are available. Library staff will also perform both WESTLAW and DIALOG searches for those who submit requests via mail or telephone. Utilization of these services is encouraged as only a small percentage of Montana lawyers appear to be taking advantage of these excellent and valuable resources.

RECENT ADDITIONS

The law library is now the place to go for dusty, musty government publications. The library recently acquired back issues of the U.S. Congressional Record and the U.S. Serial Set. Our holdings for both begin with 1925, 69th Congress and continue through the current congress.

With the arrival of our new states' attorneys general opinions on microfilm, the library now has a fifty state comprehensive attorneys general opinion file.

DISCIPLINARY HOT WATER

One of our more aware (and irony-seeking patrons) brought to our attention the author of How the Courts Rule America, Richard Neely, is the same West Virginia Supreme Court Justice who is in disciplinary hot water for requiring his state-paid secretary to baby sit for his son!

CHECK IT OUT

Before venturing to the library, be it near or far, please take note of the library's hours. The library is open: Mon. & Wed. 8 a.m.-9 p.m.; Tues. and Thurs. 8 a.m.-5 p.m.; Fri. 8 a.m.-4 p.m.; Sat. and Sun. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. You may call 444-3660 day or night to verify library hours.

A Gentle Reminder



Comments or questions regarding Legalities information may be directed to Editor, State Law Library of Montana, Justice Building, 215 N. Sanders, Helena, MT 59620.

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